

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11

LAB-06 SIL-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /196 W
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R 091430Z NOV 73

FM AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1473

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMCONSUL CURACAO BY POUCH

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PARAMARIBO 420

CARACAS FOR RSO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, NS

SUBJECT: ELECTION OUTLOOK

REF: A-59, OCTOBER 1, 1973

1. SUMMARY. THE CONSERVATIVE HINDUSTANI VHP IS LIKELY TO WIN THE ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 19 AND WILL FORM A GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL FOLLOW POLICIES GENERALLY FAVORABLE TO U.S. ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INTERESTS. THE VHP WILL ATTEMPT TO INCLUDE MAJOR CREOLE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT, IN THE INTERESTS OF STABILITY, BUT MAY BE ONLY PARTLY SUCCESSFUL. THE OUTLOOK OVER THE LONG TERM IS FOR INCREASING RACIAL AND POLITICAL POLARIZATION TOGETHER WITH GROWING POLITICAL AND LABOR UNREST. END SUMMARY.

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WM WITH ABOUT ONE WEEK REMAINING BEFORE NOVEMBER 19 ELECTION,

ASSESSMENT CONTAINED IN REFERENCE REMAINS VALID. VIRTUALLY EVERY DISINTERESTED OBSERVER HERE ESTIMATES THAT THE CONSERVATIVE HINDUSTANI VHP WILL WIN A MAJORITY OF THE 39-SEAT STATEN OVER ITS NPK RIVALS, OR AT LEAST A LARGE ENOUGH PLURALITY TO BE ABLE TO FORM A MAJORITY WITHOUT DIFFICULTIES. THE POST SHARES THIS VIEW, BUT WITH LESS CONFIDENCE THAN MOST SO-CALLED EXPERTS BECAUSE OF THE IMPONDERABLES INVOLVED, SUCH AS WHICH WAY MANY VOTERS WILL RESOLVE SOMETIMES CONFLICTING RACIAL AND ECONOMIC MOTIVATIONS; HOW YOUNGER VOTERS ENFRANCHISED BY LOWERING VOTING AGE FROM 23 TO 21 WILL VOTE; AND NOT LEAST OF ALL SURINAM'S INTRICATE COMBINATION OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION AND DISTRICT VOTING.

3. THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT VIOLENCE DURING CAMPAIGN. THIS IS AT LEAST PARTLY DUE TO THE CONFIDENT BELIEF OF EACH OF TWO MAIN BLOCS THAT IT WILL EMERGE VICTORIOUS. PERIOD IMMEDIATELY AFTER ELECTION MAY SEE SOME SCATTERED VIOLENCE CAUSED BY DISAPPOINTED SUPPORTERS.

4. WHETHER VHP ACHIEVES A MAJORITY OR MERELY A PLURALITY, VHP LEADERS ARE AWARE OF NEED TO INCLUDE SIGNIFICANT CREOLE REPRESENTATION IN THE GOVERNMENT. IN ORDER TO DO THIS, VHP CHAIRMAN LACHMON, WHO WILL PROBABLY BE CHARGED WITH FORMING THE NEW GOVERNMENT, WILL NEED TO SEPARATE THE LARGEST CREOLD PARTY, NPS, FROM THEIR NEW-FOUND LEFTIST ALLIES, THE PNR. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT BOTH PARTIES HAVE JOINED, TOGETHER WITH TWO OTHERS, A JAVANESE PARTY AND A BUSHNEGRO PARTY, IN A COALITION: THE NPK.

5. LACHMON'S TASK WILL BE COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT NPS LEADERS HAVE PLEDGED THAT THEY WILL NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, JOIN THE VHP IN POWER. THIS PLEDGE WAS MADE IN PART IN THE EXPECTATION OF AN NPK VICTORY AND IN PART AT THE BEHEST OF THE PNR. HOWEVER, IN THE LIKELY EVENT THAT THE NPK-BLOC FAILS TO GAIN POWER, THE PRESENT NPS LEADERSHIP WILL PROBABLY BE DISCREDITED AND WILL BE FORCED OUT BY THE PARTY MEMBERSHIP, MANY OR MOST OF WHOM WERE UNENTHUSIASTIC OR HOSTILE TO THE NPS ALLIANCE WITH THE PNR. IN FACT, THE ALLIANCE WILL PROBABLY TURN OUT TO HAVE BEEN A COSTLY AFFAIR FOR THE NPS IN TERMS OF THEIR REPRESENTATION IN THE STATEN. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE SMALLER PARTIES IN THE NPK-BLOC, INCLUDING THE PNR, DROVE A HARD BARGAIN WITH THE NPS REGARDING THE POSITIONING OF THE CANDIDATES OF THE RESPECTIVE PARTIES ON THE JOINT NPK CANDIDATES LIST. AS A RESULT, THE PNR PROBABLY WILL INCREASE ITS REPRESENTATION IN THE STATEN FROM ITS PRESENT ONE SEAT TO THREE, AND THE NPS WILL DECLINE FROM ITS PRESENT ELEVEN SEATS TO NINE. THIS WILL FURTHER INCREASE THE REVULSION IN THE NPS AGAINST THE PARTY LEADERSHIP.

6. A CHANGE IN THE NPS LEADERSHIP NOTWITHSTANDING, IT WILL STILL BE DIFFICULT FOR LACHMON TO BRING ALL OF THE NPS INTO THE GOVERNMENT COALITION. THE OLDER LINE CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS OF THE NPS MAY WELL BE DRAWN INTO A VHP-DOMINATED COALITION FOR REASONS OF OPPORTUNISM, PRAGMATISM AND FEAR OF THE GROWING INROADS IN THE BASE OF NPS MADE BY THE LEFTIST PNR. SYMPTOMATIC WERE THE DISTURBANCES AT AN NPK YOUTH CONGRESS ON NOVEMBER 4, WHEN MILITANT AND LEFTIST YOATHS DISRUPTED THE CONGRESS AND FACED DOWN THE MODERATE NPS LEADERS WHO WERE NOMINALLY IN CHARGE. HOWEVER, A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE NPS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY FIND IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO SWALLOW JOINING THE VHP IN THE GOVERNMENT, ESPECIALLY SINCE ELECTORAL DEMAGOGY HAS HEIGHTENED ALREADY EXISTING RACIAL ANIMOSITY OF CREOLES AGAINST HINDUSTANIS. IN ADDITION, NPS FOLLOWERS HAVE BEEN FED UNREMITTING DIET OF ATTACKS ON VHP, CHARGING IT IS EVIL AND CORRUPT, TO AN EXTENT NOT NORMALLY PRACTICED IN SURINAM. FURTHERMORE, NPS ALLIANCE WITH PNR HAS GIVEN LEADERS OF LATTER PARTY, ESPECIALLY PNR CHAIRMAN EDDY BRUMA, ACCESS TO NPS RANK AND FILE, WHICH PNR HAS NEVER BEFORE ENJOYED. BRUMA REPORTEDLY HAS GAINED CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE OVER MANY NPS FOLLOWERS BY OUTSHINING GENERALLY LACKLUSTER NPS LEADERS AT JOINT ELECTORAL MEETINGS. HE WILL USE ALL HIS INFLUENCE TO TRY TO PREVENT THE NPS FROM JOINING THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE VHP. THE DESIGNATION OF HARRY RADHAKISHUN, VHP FINANCE MINISTER IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, AS PRIME MINISTER IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT, STILL A POSSIBILITY, WOULD MAKE IT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT FOR SOME CREOLES TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH AN ABLE MAN, RADHAKISHUN IS NOT POPULAR WITH MANY CREOLES.

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R 091430Z NOV 73
FM AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1474
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PARAMARIBO 420

7. RESULT IS LIABLE TO BE A SPLIT IN THE NPS, WITH MODERATES AND CONSERVATIVES JOINING VHP AND REST REMAINING IN OPPOSITION. THIS WOULD TEND TO POLARIZE THE POLITICAL AND RACISL CONFIGURATION AND WOULD PRODUCE AN UNSTABLE SITUATION. WITH A RUMP OF THE NPS AND WHATEVER FRAGMENT OF THE PNP THAT MAY SURVIVE THE ELECTION, CREOLE REPRESENTATION IN THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE NEITHER LARGE ENOUGH NOR STRONG ENOUGH TO EVEN MAKE A SHOW OF PROTECTING CREOLE INTERESTS. FURTHERMORE, THE LARGELY CREOLE OPPOSITION WOULD SOON COME UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF BRUMA AND THE PNR, WHICH WOULD LEAVE NO DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE TO THE PARTY IN POWER.

8. U.S. INTERESTS - THE OUTLOOK FOR U.S. INTERESTS FOR THE SHORT TERM (2-3 YEARS) IS GOOD. A VHP-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT WILL ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE SOLID TIES WITH THE NETHERLANDS, LARGELY IN THE INTERESTS OF MAINTAINING IN SURINAM THE 950-MAN REINFORCED BATTALION OF THE NETHERLANDS ARMY, AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN INTERNAL STABILITY. A VHP-GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO TAKE OTHER PREVENTIVE STEPS TO MAINTAIN ORDER, AND WILL CON-
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TINUE TO FOLLOW POLICIES WHICH ARE GENERALLY FAVORABLE TO FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THE COUNTRY. ITS FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION WILL BE PRO-WESTERN AND ANTI-COMMUNIST.

9. OVER THE LONGER TERM HOWEVER THE PROSPECT IS LESS BRIGHT. A VHP-GOVERNMENT, ON ITS OWN, IS UNLIKELY TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES WHICH WILL MOVE COUNTRY OUT OF THE ECONOMIC STAGNATION OF THE LAST 5 YEARS AND ALLEVIATE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL UNREST OF THE URBAN POOR, WHO ARE LARGELY BLACK. POLARIZATION WILL CONTINUE AND THOSE CREOLE POLITICAL FORCES ALLIED WITH THE VHP IN THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE LOST, BY THE NEXT ELECTION SCHEDULED IN 1977, THE CONFIDENCE OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS, MUCH AS THE PNP HAS OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS. END PRODUCT WITHIN 5 YEARS WILL BE A CONSERVATIVE HINDUSTANI GOVERNMENT, ORIENTED TOWARD BUSINESS AND THE SMALL FARMER, OPPOSED BY A CREOLE OPPOSITION, INCREASINGLY UNDER LEFTIST INFLUENCE, WITH A BLACK WORKING CLASS BASE. THE FIRST SIGNS OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UNREST WILL PROBABLY BE LED BY THE

LARGELY CREOLAIZABBR UNIONS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT NOT LONG
AFTER ITS FORMATION.

10. IN ORDER TO REVERSE THIS UNHEALTHY TREND IT WOULD BE
NECESSARY TO (1) DECREASE RACIAL TENSIONS AND (2) STIMULATE
ECONOMIC GROWTH TO CREATE MORE JOBS AND NEW SOURCES OF REVENUE.
UNFORTUNATELY, NEITHER IS LIKELY TO OCCUR. POLITICAL LEADERS
OF BOTH RACIAL GROUPS HAVE COME TO RELY ON APPEALS TO RACE
AS A PRINCIPAL MEANS OF RALLYING SUPPORTERS. AS FOR ECONOMIC
GROWTH, ANY GOVERNMENT FORMED AS A RESULT OF A VHP VICTORY
IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO ASSIGN THIS A LOW PRIORITY, UNLESS
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NETHERLANDS AND/OR THE INTERNATIONAL
LENDING AGENCIES CAUSE THE GOS TO CHANGE ITS PRIORITIES.
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